CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

VOL. 1. OCTOBER 1, 1829. NO. 6.

EDITED BY

AYLETT RAINS.

Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.—JUDE.

[From the Christian Intelligencer.]

LIFE AND IMMORTALITY.

THE intelligence which is communicated through the gospel, is incomparably glorious. It is not only GOOD NEWS or GLAD TIDINGS, but it imparts to the believer a fulness of joy. The gospel reveals news of a peculiar description. Much intelligence may be communicated that is new, good and joyful, and yet, fall infinitely short of being the gospel of the Son of God. That intelligence, which by way of distinction, is denominated GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY, has relation to one point, in the great system of revelation, which ought to be fully understood. It is the annunciation of one great and infinitely interesting TRUTH, immediately connected with which, are a variety of circumstances, depending on it, for their relative use and importance. It is the grand centre to which they all converge; the focus where they meet and harmonize, reflecting on a world, the light and radiance of Heaven. *The declaration of life and immortality is the* TRUTH *to which we allude.* It is the doctrine of the Son of God, the Saviour of men, announcing the certainty of future, conscious, blissful and continued existence, beyond the grave. This we declare to be intelligence, incomparable and glorious, and never safely asserted, but in connexion with the *mediation of the Redeemer of sinners.* Jesus is the only name under heaven, through whom this marvellous truth can be proclaimed. Deists may boast of the individual possession

of an immortal principle, which bids defiance to dissolution, but it is no less useful than humiliating to consider that the acknowledgment of that would by no means evince the doctrine of individual, happy and perpetual existence. According to that hypothesis, the immortal principle existed in eternity, *before time with us*, without personal consciousness; and it may also exist to eternity, after we leave the world, in the same unconscious situation. As the body returns to the earth, and is, as it was, before its organization, so the spirit may return to God and remain forever without personal existence. Being an emanation from the eternal source of life, it may again mingle in the boundless splendor of immortality, or, like a particle of water from an immeasurable fountain, be again received to its capacious bosom, and lost in the ocean from which it was exhaled. From this mode of reasoning we arrive at no fairer conclusions, that we shall possess a susceptibility for happiness and glory in futurity, than that we were thus susceptible in all past eternity. The evidence goes too far, and therefore, gives no support to the hypothesis.

From the volume of nature no adequate evidence can be adduced, to produce conviction in the doctrine of life and immortality.

The history of man conducts us all finally to the same house, and leaves a world to slumber, in the regions of the dead, forever. One generation after another arises in regular succession, crowding the next former off the stage, as though anxious to exhibit their part in the strange and changeful drama of life. Not a solitary individual reenters the world's theatre. All alike take their exit, and are unknown beneath the sun forever. Go to yonder grave-yard, where mortals slumber in the arms of death, and learn the only language of the tomb, the epitaph declaration that they *once lived*. Lettered stones and monuments are more instructive than the once living thousands whose memory they preserve from oblivion. All beside them are speechless as the chambers of eternal silence. No lingering spirits hover around their mouldering relics, whispering the intelligence of their present existence. Speechless is the gentle breeze that fans the verdant cover-

ing of the departed hero, philosopher, astronomer, theologian. The country for which they seem to embark, returns us no intelligence of their safe arrival. By the light of nature we follow them to the verge of time, and standing on the shore of a vast ocean, with exquisite anxiety, we gaze until the last dreadful struggle is over, and we see them sink in the fathomless abyss. We feel our own feet sliding from the precarious bank on which we stand, and but a few suns more, and we shall be whelmed midst death's awful waves. The empire of the destroying angel is universal, including all nations, kindreds and tongues of the earth. He wields his bloody sceptre from north to south, from east to west, and at his command, nobles, princes, and monarchs bow to the dust. Statesmen, whose fame has been wafted to the four quarters of the wide world; orators, that have united the language of earth and heaven; conquerors, decked with proud laurels plucked from the fields of war; and all the dread tyrants, whose flinty compassions could never melt, while an individual remained unloaded with the iron chains of despotism, alike submit to the dominion of death; and in the sleep of the tomb, exhibit the emblem of perfect equality, with the unnumbered multitude, whose *interests*, *feelings*, *liberties* and *lives* had been but toys and baubles in their hands. Cold are the lips, motionless the tongues, withered are the laurels and nerveless the arms, in the domain of death. Universal, irreparable and eternal are the devastations of death, while man is unblest with the gospel.

The light, how glorious, then, which shines in the region of futurity. How gladdening the rays of hope, beaming on the mind's eye from beyond the dark billows of that Jordan. Hail, ye heralds of heaven, proclaiming the intelligence of the abolition of death and the redemption of men. On the wing of inspiration we are borne back to the birth of time, when light first dawned in the wide and fathomless chaos, and man emerged from nonentity, to the enjoyment of percipient, rational, active existence; and borne on the same pinions we fly forward, till time itself rests on the bosom of eternity, and men awake from the slumbers of death, immortal in their existence, and happy

in their sphere, as the God whose impression they bear. O, how transcendently glorious is the doctrine of the cross? Whose heart will not expand with rapture and gratitude, as we contemplate the glories of the risen Redeemer? The Life of the world did not see corruption, and the Prince of Peace was not left in the grave. It was not for himself alone, he arose from the *night of existence*, bursting the bands of the universal destroyer, and triumphing over all which bears the name of death. He had no separate interest, in leading the mighty conqueror, a captive at his car. He rises! and hell trembles, earth rejoices, and shouts of triumph, reverberate in Heaven. If he arose not, there is no resurrection of the dead, and in this life, we have our only hope! But if the HEAD arose, not all the power of earth and hades can retain his members in their dusty beds. At the sound of the last trump they will awake, and like a man rising from profound sleep, start into a new and perpetual state of being, to the enjoyment of life and immortality brought to light through the gospel, and the bliss of each individual, be a branch of the great vine of eternal life. Who then will abandon the hopes of immortality, the light of the gospel, for the fantacies of human learning, and the scintillations of philosophy? What reader will stop his ears to the songs of angels, and sullenly anticipate the eternal silence in the tomb of annihilation? If to believe in the doctrine of Christ, be a delusion, O, how glorious! Who would not prefer a fiction, that holds up a burning lamp to cheer the future world, rather than a reality, fraught with darkness—destructive of the momentary joys of the present life, and for immortal glory, presenting the awful, and, frightful substitute of a BEAMLESS ETERNITY.

But, adored be God, the gospel is not a fiction; it is not a delusion. It is based on the immutable promises of God. It reveals truth coeval with the purpose of Heaven. The herald of eternal peace was ordained above the clouds, and under the commission and seal of Omnipotence, "*proclaimed glad tidings of great joy to all people*"—"*peace on earth, good will toward men.*"

THE DAYTON MEETING.

On the fourth Saturday and Sunday in August, a meeting of individuals, who call themselves Disciples of Jesus Christ, was held at Dayton, Montgomery County, Ohio, for the ostensible purposes of worship, edification, and reform. There were many disciples present from a distance, about twelve of whom were public teachers of the Christian religion. I myself attended, and scrutinized the proceedings of this meeting, with all the exactness, and impartiality of which I was capable, the result of which, was, a conviction, that a redeeming spirit abode in the bosoms of a large majority of these disciples. They seemed conscious of the necessity of reformation, and exhibited much anxiety to become better acquainted with the doctrine of Christ, and with the order of the primitive Churches. The meeting was conducted, under the influence of that meek and quiet spirit, which ought always to characterise Christian disciples, and which never fails to recommend the religion of Jesus.

I was the more pleased with the unanimity, and kind feeling, so conspicuous in this meeting, from my knowledge of the principles, from which they originated. Their fellowship, was not founded on matters of human speculation, but on stubborn gospel matters of fact. A belief that Jesus is the King, and Lawgiver of Zion; and that through his name, they enjoyed the remission of sins, and the hope of eternal life, filled their souls with joy, more, far more refined and permanent, than can ever be felt by those who build their fellowship on the precarious basis of speculative peculiarities.

The foundation which Heaven has appointed, on which for us to build all our religious faith, hope, love, joy, fellowship, and every thing else, is Jesus once crucified, but now risen from the dead! Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, the Almighty in the Christian superstructure. The Christian religion is a divinely constituted matter of fact system, in which no human opinion can be found, and which ever did

and ever will refuse an incorporation with human opinions. It is in matter and form, in principle, and manifestation, in cause and effect, a Divine production, so that it needs no human additions,—admits no human diminutions.

As soon as we understand that the whole Christian edifice, is founded on those facts, concerning which the apostles gave the most unequivocal testimony; and that with respect to those facts, believers may enjoy a unity of faith, at the same time that they exercise a diversity of opinions, we are possessed of information, of incalculable importance. The death of Jesus for our sins, and his resurrection for our justification, will then form a centre around which the holy affections of every disciple will play, and to which all his moral powers will be strongly attracted. And hence also, the wisdom of God in the creation of his unpolluted spiritual temple, will be farther apparent.

The Christian religion is destined to universal extension, and to the bringing of all the kindreds of the earth, into one lovely, loving family. But as men are placed under different circumstances; as their minds are differently organized, and their opportunities for information differ, so must their opinions also necessarily differ. Now these things being so, had God made unity of opinion necessary to Christian fellowship, such a thing as a church could never have existed, for we can find no two men precisely of the same opinions. Hence the gospel contemplates, not unity of opinion, but unity of spirit and of faith. It presents us with Jesus, as the glorious object of Christian faith, and his law as the rule by which for us to regulate our actions, and pronounces the most cheering benedictions upon every person who has the faith of Peter and the eunuch, and the obedience of this faith. "Of a truth I perceive," said Peter "that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

Of this peculiarity of the Christian religion, a majority of our friends who attended at this meeting, seemed to be conscious. Hence during the public exercises, as well as the private devotional conferences which occupied our at-

tention, during the two days of our meeting, the minds of the teachers, and the taught, seemed riveted to "*the word of the Lord.*" I perceived but little of that very fashionable hankering after the bewildering metaphysics, and popular though vain philosophy of the modern pulpit, which has already divided Christendom into hundreds of quarrelsome factions, and now continues to perpetuate the religious, or rather irreligious hostility of the sects. Jesus and the resurrection, repentance and the remission of sins, was our theme! We needed, we desired no other! We were conscious, that when compared with the word of the Lord, all human speculations and opinions—all human philosophy, and wisdom, were as cold as moonshine, as insipid as the white of an egg, and as inefficacious in the conversion of sinners, as would be a lecture on phrenology, or a disquisition on the chemistry of the moon! "The word of the Lord," is the only living, efficient instrument, of Christian conversion.

The public teachers, as well as the people, seemed much disposed to attend to the evidences of the Christian religion. I think one of them, a man of talents too, observed that he recollected the time very well, when he would have been much afraid, to encounter a Deist. The reason which he assigned for this fear, was, his former ignorance of the evidences upon which the Christian religion is predicated. But he had now become a fearless advocate for a religion of facts! I mention this circumstance in order to show, that the time has arrived,—the day has dawned, in which the *ancient order of things* will be restored. Ministers of the gospel will cease to preach their dreams, and impulses! They will deal in facts, such, and such only, as made the sum total of apostolic preaching! They will consequently stop the mouths of infidels, and of all gainsayers, as the primitive preachers did, and the gospel of Christ will triumph gloriously, until Jesus will be king of nations, as he is now king of saints!

In concluding this article I will only farther observe, that I consider the founding of the Christian religion upon facts rather than matters of human opinion, and of hu-

man speculation, one incontrovertible evidence of its truth; for it is in this respect, not only different from all other religions, but it is opposed to all the wisdom of the men of this world, so much so, that they have generally departed from it, and have substituted in its place their own systems of speculative philosophy. "I certify you" says Paul, "that the gospel which was preached by me, is not after man: For I neither received it of man, nor was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."—EDITOR.

Extract, from a letter addressed to the Editor of Christian Evidences, by a respectable Deist.

"It is truly gratifying to every well wisher of the human family, to observe the progress of liberal principles: and I should not despair living to witness the downfall of priestly despotism, and to participate the reward of our patriotic labors, if I did not see among our liberals, a disposition to quarrel about trifles, and to erect divers little systems, and plans of their own, on the prospective ruins of their opponents, which they adhere to, and propagate with a spirit not much inferior to that which they are endeavoring to destroy.

If all the real enemies of orthodoxy from the Universalist down to, (or up to,—just as you please) the Deist, or even Atheist, (if such there be,) could be content to demolish our modern Babylon, or break Pandora's box, without being too anxious to divide the spoil before the battle is won, we should then be sure of victory. All believe in the dethronement of orthodoxy, but each insists on taking its place, clothed to be sure in a mantle of a different shade of colouring, whether the texture be in reality the same or not.

Mr. Campbell appears to batter in breach, as military men would say, more effectually than any within my knowledge.—His baptism or dipping plan as some call it, answers admirably as a substitute for a creed, without its concomitant evils."

* * * * * * * *

REMARKS.

The above letter suggested to my mind the following remarks:

1st. That in these "perilous times," there is a great outcry against priestcraft, and against being priest-ridden, while at the same time many of those who so cordially hate the priests, and their craft, are gulled out of their wits by the craft of Satan, and bear the saddle of the adversary of souls with the docility of a waggon horse! Now I am no friend to priest-craft, so far as it is evil, nor would I consent to be ridden by the most illustrious priest under heaven: but at the same time I would just as lief carry three score and six priests on my neck, as to permit his "*sooty Highness*," to ride like a prince on my shoulders! To be priest, or Devil ridden, which is the most oppressive? This is the question.

2nd. Much has been said about liberal Christians, and liberal Christianity. But what do we mean by such phraseology? Do we mean that liberal Christianity is so exceedingly liberal, as to relax the reins of Messiah's Government, so that every man may live as he lists? Such Christianity ought to have prefixed to it, the word *anti*. As to myself I know of no system of Christianity, which I consider to be preferable to that of the New Testament, and this will "pull down priestly despotism," and bring such as walk in its light, to enjoy the "reward of their patriotic labors." Unfortunately however, many of our liberals, wear a party coloured coat, of not the finest texture, linsey woolsey in its composition, and fabricated with such jesuitical cunning, peculiar to their respective crafts, that except a man would consent to be led by his nose, and clothed by proxy, he can never hope to make a respectable appearance in the religious *beau monde*: or to speak without a figure, the philosophical systems of our liberals, as they call themselves, are for the most part so abstract and complicated, as to be above the reach of ordinary capacities, so that they are as prolific sources of partyism, as are any of the mystical peculiarities of the orthodox Hence we have Atheistical liberals, Deistical liberals, nothing-

arian liberals, Arian, Socinian and Universalist liberals, and I know not how many others might be added to the list; and many of these liberals, have just patriotism and liberality enough, to answer Mr. Brownson's description of a bigot. "I never" said Mr. B. in his strictures on my letters, "knew a bigot in my life who was not willing that others should believe just like himself." Let the advocates for liberal christianity obey that part of the law of Christ, which is recorded in the 1st verse, of 14 Rom. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but without regard to differences of opinion,"* and after having received such individual, let the whole congregation consider it to be unlawful to contend about matters of human opinion, and we will consider this an evidence of their christian liberality.

3rd. Mr. Campbell "batters in breach more effectually than any other man," because he sets not up his own wisdom, in opposition to the wisdom of heaven. Christianity, as it is in the Book, has hitherto been his theme. He arrogates not to himself the authority of an ambassador from heaven, nor does he pretend to be a leader of the people, or the subject of new revelations. He considers Jesus to be an embassador from the Father, and the Apostles as embassadors from Jesus, and labors to persuade the people to submit to their teaching. It is true that he considers baptism as having been commanded by the King, and we know in fact that it was commanded by Him, and that we have no right to repeal any of the divine laws. In reading of the New Testament, we ought never to enquire in the first place, whether any command or ordinance will answer in the place of a creed. It is our duty to acquaint ourselves with the commands of Jesus, and if we believe him to be a teacher sent from God, we may know, that all his commands, were designed to be of great utility to the obedient.

4th. I hope that my friend who wrote me the above letter, will read with impartiality the discussion on the evidences of christianity, between Messrs. Campbell and Owen. It would afford me much pleasure to hear that he

*Macknight's translation.

had embraced the simple unadulterated gospel of life, especially as he is a man, whose kindness will never be forgotten by me. For at the same time that I consider it to be my duty to "contend earnestly for the faith," I also consider it to be a duty which christianity enjoins on me, to cherish every grateful, and benevolent emotion.—EDITOR.

The leading facts in the history of the gospel are corroborated by the testimony of others.

THOMAS CHALMERS.

The evidence we have already brought forward for the antiquity of the New Testament, and the veneration in which it was held from the earliest ages of the church, is an implied testimony of all Christians to the truth of the gospel history. By proving the authenticity of St. Paul's epistles to the Corinthians, we not merely establish his testimony to the truth of the Christian miracles; we establish the additional testimony of the whole church of Corinth, who would never have respected these epistles, if Paul had ventured upon a falsehood so open to detection, as the assertion, that miracles were wrought among them, which not a single individual ever witnessed. By proving the authenticity of the New Testament at large, we secure, not merely that argument which is founded on the testimony and concurrence of those immense multitudes, who in distant countries submitted to the New Testament, as the rule of their faith. The testimony of the teachers, whether we take into consideration the subject of that testimony, or the circumstances under which it was delivered, is of itself a stronger argument for the truth of the gospel history than can be alleged for the truth of any other history which has been transmitted down to us from ancient times. The concurrence of the taught carries along with it a host of additional testimonies, which gives an evidence to the evangelical story, that is altogether unexampled. On a point of ordinary history, the testimony of Tacitus is held decisive, because it is not contradicted. The history of

the New Testament is not only not contradicted, but confirmed by the strongest possible expressions which men can give of their acquiescence in its truth; by thousands who were either ear or eye-witnesses of the transactions recorded, who could not be deceived, who had no interest, and no glory to gain by supporting a falsehood, and who, by their sufferings in the cause of what they professed to be their belief, gave the highest evidence that human nature can give of sincerity.

In this circumstance, it may be perceived, how much the evidence of christianity goes beyond all ordinary historical evidence. A profane historian relates a series of events which happen in a particular age; and we count it well, if it be his own age, and if the history which he gives us be the testimony of a cotemporary author. Another historian succeeds him at the distance of years, and by repeating the same story gives additional evidence of his testimony to its truth. A third historian perhaps goes over the same ground, and lends another confirmation to the history. And it is thus, by collecting all the lights which are thinly scattered over the tract of ages and of centuries, that we obtain all the evidence which can be got, and all the evidence that is generally wished for.

Now, there is room for a thousand presumptions, which, if admitted, would overturn the whole of this evidence. For any thing we know, the first historians may have had some interest in disguising the truth, or substituting in its place a falsehood, and a fabrication. True, it has not been contradicted, but they form a very small number of men who feel strongly or particularly interested in a question of history. The literary and speculative men of that age may have perhaps been engaged in other pursuits, or their testimonies may have perished in the wreck of centuries. The second historian may have been so far removed in point of time from the events of his narratives, that he can furnish us not with an independent, but with a derived testimony. He may have copied his account from the original historian, and the falsehood come down to us in the shape of an authentic and well attested history. Presumptions may be multiplied without end, yet in spite of

them, there is a natural confidence in the veracity of man, which disposes us to as firm a belief in many of the facts of ancient history, as in the occurrences of the present day.

The history of the gospel, however, stands distinguished from all other history, by the uninterrupted nature of its testimony, which carries down its evidences, without a chasm, from its earliest promulgation to the present day. We do not speak of the superior weight and splendor of its evidences, at the publication of that history, as being supported not merely by the testimony of one, but by the concurrence of several independent witnesses. We do not speak of its subsequent writers, who follow one another in a far closer and more crowded train, than there is any other example of in the history or literature of the world. We speak of the strong though unwritten testimony of its numerous proselytes, who, in the very fact of their proselytism, give the strongest possible confirmation to the gospel, and to fill up every chasm in the recorded evidence of past times.

In the written testimonies for the truth of the Christian religion, Barnabas comes next in order to the first promulgators of the evangelical story. He was a cotemporary of the apostles, and writes a very few years after the publication of the pieces which make up the New Testament. Clement follows, who was a fellow-laborer of Paul, and writes an epistle in the name of the church of Rome, to the church of Corinth. The written testimonies follow one another with a closeness and a rapidity of which there is no example; but what we insist on at present, is the unwritten and implied testimony of the people who composed these two churches. There can be no fact better established, than that these two churches were planted in the days of the apostles, and that the epistles which were respectively addressed to them, were held in the utmost authority and veneration. There is no doubt, that the leading facts of the gospel history were familiar to them; that it was in the power of many individuals amongst them to verify these facts, either by their own personal observation, or by an actual conversation with eye witnesses; and that in particular, it was in the power of almost

every individual in the church of Corinth, either to verify the miracles which St. Paul alludes to, in his epistle to that church, or to detect and expose the imposition, had there been no foundation for such an allusion. What do we see in all this, but the strongest possible testimony of a whole people to the truth of the Christian miracles: there is nothing like this in common history, the formation of a society, which can only be explained by the history of the gospel, and where the conduct of every individual furnishes a distinct pledge and evidence of its truth. And to have a full view of the argument, we must reflect, that it is not one, but many societies scattered over the different countries of the world; that the principle, upon which each society was formed, was the divine authority of his apostles, resting upon the recorded miracles of the New Testament; that these miracles were wrought with a publicity, and at a nearness of time, which rendered them accessible to the inquiries of all, for upwards of half a century; that nothing but the power of conviction could have induced the people of that age to embrace a religion so disgraced and so persecuted; that every temptation was held out for its disciples to abandon it; and that though some of them, overpowered by the terrors of punishment, were driven to apostacy, yet not one of them has left us a testimony which can impeach the miracles of Christianity, or the integrity of its first teachers.

It may be observed, that in pursuing the line of continuancy from the days of the apostle, the written testimonies for the truth of the Christian miracles follow one another in closer succession, than we have any other example of in ancient history. But what gives such peculiar and unprecedented evidence to the history of the gospel, is that in the concurrence of the multitudes who embraced it, and in the existence of those numerous churches and societies of men who espoused the profession of the Christian faith, we cannot but perceive, that every small interval of time betwixt the written testimonies of authors is filled up by materials so strong and so firmly cemented, as to present us with an unbroken chain of evidence, carrying as much authority along with it, as if it had been a diurnal

record, commencing from the days of the apostles, and authenticated through its whole progress by the testimony of thousands.

Every convert to the Christian faith in these days, gives one additional testimony to the truth of the gospel history. Is he a Gentile? The sincerity of his testimony is approved by the persecutions, the sufferings, the danger, and often the certainty of martyrdom, which the profession of Christianity incurred. Is he a Jew? The sincerity of his testimony is approved by all these evidences, and in addition to them by this well known fact, that the faith and doctrine of Christianity was in the highest degree repugnant to the wishes and prejudices of that people. It ought never to be forgotten, that in as far as Jews are concerned, Christianity does not owe a single proselyte to its doctrines, but to the power and credit of its evidences, and that Judea was the chief theatre on which these evidences were exhibited. It cannot be too often repeated, that these evidences rest not upon arguments but upon facts, and that the time, and the place, and the circumstance, rendered these facts accessible to the inquiries of all who chose to be at the trouble of this examination. And there can be no doubt that this trouble was taken, whether we reflect on the nature of the Christian faith, as being so offensive to the pride and bigotry of the Jewish people, or whether we reflect on the consequences of embracing it, which were derision, and hatred, and banishment, and death. We may be sure, that a step which involved in it such painful sacrifices, would not be entered into upon light and insufficient grounds. In the sacrifices they made, the Jewish converts gave every evidence of having delivered an honest testimony in favor of the Christian miracles; and when we reflect, that many of them must have been eye witnesses, and all of them had it in their power to verify these miracles by conversation and correspondence with bye-standers, there can be no doubt, that it was not merely an honest, but a competent testimony. There is no fact better established, than that many thousands among the Jews believed in Jesus and his apostles; and we have therefore to allege their conversion, as a strong additional

confirmation to the written testimony of the original historians.

One of the popular objections against the truth of the Christian miracles, is the general infidelity of the Jewish people. We are convinced, that at the moment of proposing this objection, an actual delusion exists in the mind of the infidel. In his conception, the Jews and the Christians stand opposed to each other. In the belief of the latter, he sees nothing but a party or an interested testimony, and in the unbelief of the former, he sees a whole people persevering in their ancient faith, and resisting the new faith, on the ground of its insufficient evidences. He forgets all the while, that the testimony of a great many of these Christians, is in fact the testimony of Jews. He only attends to them in their present capacity. He contemplates them in the light of Christians, and annexes to them all that suspicion and incredulity which are generally annexed to the testimony of an interested party. He is aware of what they are at present. Christians and defenders of Christianity; but he has lost sight of their original situation, and is totally unmindful of this circumstance, that in their transition from Judaism to Christianity, they have given him the very evidence he is in quest of. Had another thousand of these Jews renounced the faith of their ancestors, and embraced the religion of Jesus, they would have been equivalent to a thousand additional testimonies in favor of Christianity, and testimonies too of the strongest and most unsuspicious kind, that can well be imagined. But this evidence would make no impression on the mind of an infidel, and the strength of it is disguised, even from the eyes of the Christian. These thousand, in the moment of their convertion, lose the appellation of Jews, and merge into the name and distinction of Christians. The Jews, though diminished in number, retain the national appellation; and the obstinacy with which they persevere in the belief of their ancestors, is still looked upon as the adverse testimony of an entire people. So long as one of that people continues a Jew, his testimony is looked upon as a serious impediment in the way of the Christian evidences. But the moment he

becomes a Christian, his motives are contemplated with distrust. He is one of the obnoxious and suspected party. The mind carries a reference only to what he is, and not to what he has been. It overlooks the change of sentiment, and forgets, that in the renunciation of old habits, and old prejudices, in defiance to sufferings and disgrace, in attachment to a religion so repugnant to the pride and bigotry of their nation, and above all, in their submission to a system of doctrines which rested its authority on the miracles of their own time, and their own remembrance, every Jewish convert gives the most decisive testimony which man can give for the truth and divinity of our religion.

But why then, says the infidel, did they not all believe? Had the miracles of the gospel been true, we do not see how human nature could have held out against an evidence so striking and so extraordinary; nor can we at all enter into the obstinacy of that belief which is ascribed to the majority of the Jewish people, and which led them to shut their eyes against a testimony that no man of common sense, we think, could have resisted?

Many Christian writers have attempted to resolve this difficulty, and to prove that the infidelity of the Jews, in spite of the miracles which they saw, is perfectly consistent with the known principles of human nature. For this purpose, they have enlarged, with much force and plausibility, on the strength and inveteracy of the Jewish prejudices—on the bewildering influence of religious bigotry upon the understanding of men—on the woeful disappointment which Christianity offered to the pride and interests of the nation—on the selfishness of the priesthood—and on the facility with which they might turn a blind fanatical multitude, who had been trained, by their earliest habits, to follow and to revere them.

In the gospel history itself, we have a very consistent account at least of the Jewish opposition to the claims of our Saviour. We see the deeply wounded pride of a nation, that felt itself disgraced by the loss of its independence. We see the arrogance of its peculiar and exclusive claims to the favor of the Almighty. We see the antici-

pation of a great prince, who was to deliver them from the power and subjection of their enemies. We see their insolent contempt for the people of other countries, and the foulest scorn, that they should be admitted to an equality with themselves in the honors and benefits of a revelation from heaven. We may easily conceive, how much the doctrine of Christ and his apostles was calculated to gall, and irritate, and disappoint them; how it must have mortified their national vanity; how it must have alarmed the jealousy of an artful and interested priesthood; and how it must have scandalized the great body of the people, by the liberality with which it addressed itself to all men, and to all nations, and raised to an elevation with themselves, those whom the firmest habits and prejudices of their country had led them to contemplate under all the disgrace and ignominy of outcasts.

Accordingly we know, in fact, that bitterness, and resentment, and wounded pride, lay at the bottom of a great deal of the opposition which Christianity experienced from the Jewish people. In the New Testament history itself, we see repeated examples of their outrageous violence, and this is confirmed by the testimony of many other writers. In the history of the martyrdom of Polycarp, it is stated, that the Gentiles and Jews inhabiting Smyrna, in a furious rage, and with a loud voice, cried out, "This is the teacher of Asia, the Father of the Christians, the destroyer of our gods, who teacheth all men not to sacrifice, nor to worship them!" They collected wood, and the dried branches of trees, for his pile; and it is added, "the Jews also, according to custom, assisting with the greatest forwardness." It is needless to multiply testimonies to a point so generally understood. That it was not conviction alone which lay at the bottom of their opposition to the Christians; that a great deal of passion entered into it; and that their numerous acts of hostility against the worshippers of Jesus, carry in them all the marks of fury and resentment.

Now we know that the power of passion will often carry it very far over the power of conviction. We know that the strength of conviction is not in proportion to the quan-

tity of evidence *presented*, but to the quantity of evidence *attended to*, and perceived, in consequence of that attention. We also know, that attention, is, in a great measure, a voluntary act, and that it is often in the power of the mind, both to turn away its attention from what would land it in any painful or humiliating conclusion, and to deliver itself up exclusively to those arguments which flatter its taste and its prejudices. All this lies within the range of familiar and every day experience. We all know how much it ensures the success of an argument, when it gets a *favorable* hearing. In by far the greater number of instances, the parties in a litigation are not merely each *attached* to their own side of the question; but each *confident and believing* that theirs is the side on which the justice lies. In these contests of opinion, which take place every day betwixt man and man, and particularly if passion and interest have any share in the controversy, it is evident to the slightest observation, that though it might have been selfishness, in the first instance, which gave a peculiar direction to the understanding, yet each of the parties often comes, at last, to entertain a sincere conviction in the truth of his own argument. It is not that truth is not one and immutable. The whole difference lies in the observers, each of them viewing the object through the medium of his own prejudices, or cherishing those peculiar habits of attention and understanding to which taste or inclination had disposed him.

In addition to all this, we know, that though the evidence for a particular truth be so glaring, that it forces itself upon the understanding, and all the sophistry of passion and interest cannot withstand it, yet, if this truth be of a very painful and humiliating kind, the obstinacy of man will often dispose him to resist its influence, and, in the bitterness of his malignant feelings, to carry a hostility against it, and that too in proportion to the weight of the argument which may be brought forward in its favor.

Now, if we take into account the inveteracy of the Jewish prejudices, and reflect how unpalatable and how mortifying to their pride must have been the doctrine of a cru-

cified Saviour, we believe that their conduct, in reference to Christianity and its miraculous evidences, presents us with nothing anomalous or inexplicable, and that it will appear a possible and a likely thing to every understanding, that has been cultivated in the experience of human affairs, in the nature of man, and the science of its character and phenomena.

There is a difficulty, however, in the way of this investigation. From the nature of the case, it bears no resemblance to any thing else, that has either been recorded in history, or has come within the range of our personal observation. There is no other example of a people called upon to renounce the darling faith and principles of their country, and that upon the authority of miracles exhibited before them. All the experience we have about the operation of prejudice, and the perversion of the human temper and understanding, cannot afford a complete solution of the question. In many respects, it is a case *sui generis*, and the only creditable information which we can obtain, to enlighten us in this inquiry, is through the medium of that very testimony upon which the difficulty in question has thrown the suspicion that we want to get rid of.

REASONS FOR WITHDRAWING FROM THE UNIVERSALISTS.

No. I.

I will now proceed agreeably with the solicitations of my friends, and the conclusions of my own judgment, to give my reasons for withdrawing from the Universalists; and in order that these reasons may with the greater facility be apprehended in their full force by all honest inquirers, I will from time to time, present them to the public, under distinct heads, accompanied with their proper evidences. The first reason then, which I will assign for my withdrawal from that connexion, is the following:

I perceived that we were in a state of faction, or heresy, and consequently liable to the denunciations of the

law of Christ, which have been pronounced against heretics.

And here it may be necessary to observe, that I do not use the word heretic, in its popish, or ecclesiastical sense. Ecclesiastical councils have denounced men as heretics, merely on account of differences of opinion, when they were sound in *the faith*. But the law of Jesus takes not cognizance of the opinions of men, but only of their *faith* and *behavior*. The two words, *faith* and *obedience*, are expressive of the whole duty of every man. Faith in the Son of God, and obedience to His law, comprehends all Christian duty, and gives us a moral fitness irrespective of all human opinions which infringe not upon the principles of this faith and obedience, for a place in the heavenly society. To believe with Peter and the eunuch, "that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God," and to obey his commandments, no matter what our opinions may be, is to be a Christian of the primitive order. And hence the Apostle says, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye; but without regard to differences of opinions."

Now as this is a law of the King, it follows that every deviation from it, is an act of *heresy*, or *faction*. Hence says the Apostle to his brethren, among whom schisms had crept in: "*For there must be also heresies among you.*" The reason why the Apostle accused them of heresy, was not their not being sound in the faith, but on account of their disobedience to the law of Christ. The law of Christ made it to be the duty of the church to receive such as were weak in the faith, without respect to their opinions, and after having received them, it said to the whole congregation, *let there be no contentions among you.* But of the congregation at Corinth, Paul says, "It hath been declared unto me of you my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." Thus you see, these Christians were in a state of faction, or heresy; and hence the Apostle expostulates with them, in the following words: "Is Christ

divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?"

Another law of Christ applicable to cases of heresy, is recorded in Paul's letter to Titus, and reads thus: "Avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is a heretic, (or who will not avoid contentions agreeably with the above command,) after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself."

This then being the law of Christ, the Apostle expostulates with these factionists, who were sowing the seeds of dissention in the church, and boldly exposes the folly of their proceedings. To those who called themselves Paulites, or who said "we are of Paul," he replies, "was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?" by which he shows that before any man, can, in a Christian sense, with any consistency be called after the name of any person or thing under heaven, that person or thing must in the first place have been crucified for him, and he in the second place must have been baptized into the name of that person or thing. This is an unavoidable conclusion.

Having now ascertained from the pen of an infallible teacher, the meaning, as well as the criminality of heresy, I will proceed in the next place, to shew, that the Universalists are in a heretical condition; and if in doing this, I should make a cap for any other sects, such as will fit them, they shall be welcome to wear it. I prove then,

1st. That the Universalists are heretical, because they have so far departed from Jesus Christ, who is the husband of all Christians, as to call themselves by another name. Would not you distrust the fidelity of your wife, were she to call herself by the name of some other man? The Universalists have named themselves after the Universe! A husband of vast dimensions truly! What capacious desires must these men have, in making such a selection as this! But my friends, has the universe been crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of the universe?

If not, Paul being the judge, "you are carnal, and walk as men," in calling yourselves by this name, however grand, august, and imposing it may seem to you to be. As soon as I became acquainted with the genius of the Christian religion, I rejected this name, as a heretical remnant of Babylon, and was by the authority of Jesus Christ, baptized into His name, in order, He having been crucified for me, that I might be constitutionally entitled to the ancient appellation, "Christian."

2nd. I prove the Universalists to be heretical, by their perpetual contentions, about matters of human opinion. "*All will be saved*," is the *hobby* upon which they ride, through every town, village, and city. And although scarcely any two of their public teachers agree in their method of proving this doctrine, still every man claims to himself the privilege of proving it in his own way, by the exhibition of a long string of his own opinions. And the opinions of one teacher, is not unfrequently so disagreeable to the feelings, and so incompatible with the opinions of other teachers, that I have myself, during the time of an association, known public teachers to leave the house in high dudgeon, before the close of *divine service*, as we called it. Now this is not the case with those Christians with whom I am associated. "*We all speak the same things.*" We consider all opinions, when compared to the "word of the Lord," as being trifles light as air, and hence they can never accumulate sufficient weight to cause divisions among us.

3rd. I prove the Universalists to be heretical, by their ungenerous, and uncharitable opposition to me, after my reformation. From the time of my baptism to the present moment, I have held out the olive branch to these people, nor can one of them be found who can say that I ever slighted him in consequence of his differing from me in opinion. I am above the little trifling bickerings of party. If a man is a believer in Jesus Christ, and obeys his positive commands, he is my brother in the Lord. I will never quarrel with him about his opinions. So long as he in obedience to that law of Christ, which is written in Titus, "follows after the things that make for peace," and

consequently refuses to contend for his philosophical opinions, I will give him my right hand of fellowship, as a brother beloved. But so soon as he becomes contentious, and "turns aside unto profane, and vain babblings," I will "admonish him the first and second time," and if he does not reform, he is a "heretic," and as such "is subverted, and sins, being condemned of himself." Now this having been my uniform course, had not the Universalists been more influenced by a spirit of faction or party pride, than by the spirit of Christ, they would have rejoiced in my Christian magnanimity, and instead of opposing me, as they have done, they would have united with me in my labors of love, and we should now have been happy in the enjoyment of Christian fellowship. I thank God, that several Universalists, and perhaps a majority of the Restorationists in this state, have done so, and if they continue to run in the Christian race as they commenced, we shall all, notwithstanding our diversity of opinions, continue "to speak the same things," and "there will be no division among us."

I will now close this article, by informing my readers, that the above topic is not at variance with the title of this work. Until heresy, or faction shall be exterminated from our Zion, infidelity must inevitably triumph: and we must remain in a state of division, or faction, so long as we continue to preach our opinions. But the moment we understand the genius of the Christian religion, and speak nothing in our congregations but "*the word of the Lord*," we will "all speak the same things," and there will "*be no contentions among us.*"—EDITOR.

Terms, One Dollar per year, payable in advance.